

**Planning and Zoning Commission
Special Meeting
Monday, November 22, 2021
7:00 P.M.
Preston Plains Middle School**

1. Call to Order

Art Moran called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

2. Roll Call

Members

Art Moran, Jr. – Chairman
Richard Chalifoux – Vice Chairman
Zach Turner - not sworn in yet
Denise Beale - excused
Charles Raymond
Doreen Rankin
Mike Sinko

Alternates

Nate Koniecko -absent
Fred Eddy - seated for Denise Beale
Terri Eickel - excused

Kathy Warzecha – Town Planner
Kimberly Lang – Recorder

Also present:

28 members of the public

3. Determination of Quorum

4. Approval of the Minutes

a. Regular Meeting Minutes for Oct. 26, 2021

The following corrections were noted:

- Page 3, 9th line - should read Jim Bell and Merrill Gerber
- Page 5, 2nd paragraph, last line - should read another language

***Richard Chalifoux motion to approve the Oct. 26, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes as corrected.
Doreen Rankin seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.***

b. Public Hearing Minutes for Oct. 26, 2021

Mike Sinko motion to approve the Oct. 26, 2021 Public Hearing Minutes. Richard Chalifoux seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

There was a brief discussion of the lateness of the meeting packet's arrival in the mail. It was noted that the packets were mailed on Wednesday before the meeting. It was decided that Agenda and all the packet information will also be emailed so members could review the material beforehand in the event they do not receive the mailed packet in time for the meeting.

5. Communications

- a. **Zoning Permit Application #2021-05**, Paws of War, Inc., Robert Misseri, Applicant and Glenn Ceccarelli, Owner for property located at 76 Branch Hill Road; Short-Term Rental, Veterans Sanctuary Residence for members.
- b. **Site Plan Application #2021-03**, Blue Camp CT, LLC, Applicant and Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, Owner for property located at 451, 455, & 495 Route 2; Comprehensive luxury recreational campground.
- c. **Special Exception Application #2021-03**, Blue Camp CT, LLC, Applicant and Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, Owner for property located at 451, 455, & 495 Route 2; Comprehensive luxury recreational campground.
- d. Email dated Oct. 28, 2021 to Kathy Warzecha, Town Planner, from Dell Woodmanseeregarding campground bond release for Site Plan Application #2020-01 and Special Application #2020-01 Amos Lake Holding Co. LLC.
- e. Connecticut Federation of Planning and Zoning Agencies Quarterly Newsletter, Fall 2021.
- f. Planning and Zoning Commission 2022 Calendar of Meetings
- g. Zoning Bulletin, September 10, 2021
- h. Email received Friday, November 19, 2021 from Max Zachem to Bekah Little regarding 356 Route 2.

6. Public Hearing - None

7. Old Business - None

8. New Business

Zoning Permit

- a. **Zoning Permit Application #2021-05**, Paws of War, Inc., Robert Misseri, Applicant and Glenn Ceccarelli, Owner for property located at 76 Branch Hill Road; Short-Term Rental, Veterans Sanctuary Residence for members.

Kathy Warzecha explained that the use of the property will be used for Veterans on a short-term basis and that it fits within the Short-Term Rental Regulations as a similar use.

David Sherwood stepped forward to explain that the organization PAWS for War is a nonprofit that helps veterans and first responders and their service dogs by providing a sanctuary for a brief respite or retreat. He described the property at 74-76 Branch Hill Road. There are two houses on the property. The house on 74 would be for the caretaker and the log cabin at 76 would be for those veterans and first responders seeking a respite. They would be allowed to use the property for usually a 2-3 week stay at a time. There would be no more than 4 people at a time using the house because there are only two bedrooms. The veterans would not be charged a fee to stay at the house. This would be a place for them and their service dog to stay and regroup before returning to service. There would be no programs offered at the home, just a place to relax and decompress.

There are a few repairs that are needed to make the property compliant with regulations.

Kathy Warzecha stated that exiting the property there is a sight line issue to the right and asks that the vegetation be removed and perhaps the top row of the stonewall be removed to improve the situation. She also would like to place a Hidden Drive sign that would warn oncoming traffic. She felt this was necessary because the occupants of the house won't be familiar with the area. Kathy Warzecha mentioned that all the abutting property owners have been notified. And she mentioned that 3 items needed to be addressed for safety reasons; and they are: hand railing for the basement stairs, smoke detectors be installed, and emergency shut off for the furnace.

Building Inspector Tom Weber asked that the wood stove be removed from the home so that it won't be used. His concern was that the short-term occupant may not be knowledgeable or familiar with using a wood stove.

Mike Sinko felt that was not a condition that the Commission could attach to this application.

David Sherwood felt that that was underestimating the servicemen that would be using the property.

Doreen Rankin motioned to approve Zoning Permit Application #2021-05, Paws of War, Inc. Robert Misseri, Applicant and Glenn Ceccarelli, Owner for property located at 76 Branch Hill Road; Short-Term Rental, Veterans Sanctuary Residence for members, as applicable to the Building Inspector and the Fire Marshall. Fred Eddy seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Site Plan

- b. Site Plan Application #2021-03, Blue Camp CT, LLC, Applicant and Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, Owner for property located at 451, 455, & 495 Route 2; Comprehensive luxury recreational campground.**

Kathy Warzecha explained that the Commission should schedule a Public Hearing for January and before that hearing, schedule a workshop meeting so the Commission can review the application. It is a big project that requires more than what her hours will allow. The Commission could hire an outside person to review the plan or the applicant can reimburse her additional hours as a consultant to review the plan. It will take approximately 50 hours. It was suggested that SCCOG assist with the review, approximately 15 hours. Kathy Warzecha also suggested getting input from a Traffic Engineer.

The consensus of the Commission was that they would prefer that Mrs. Warzecha reviewed the plan for the town rather than an outside consultant and to also hire a traffic engineer to review the plan. The Commission members will walk the property together on Saturday, December 4, 2021 at 11 A.M. with Attorney Andrew McCoy. The Commission will hold a Workshop on January 11, 2022 at 6:30 P.M. in the Preston Plains Cafeteria to review the application.

Special Exception

- c. **Special Exception Application #2021-03**, Blue Camp CT, LLC, Applicant and Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, Owner for property located at 451, 455, & 495 Route 2; Comprehensive luxury recreational campground.

Richard Chalifoux motioned to schedule a Public Hearing for Special Exception Application #2021-03, Blue Camp CT, LLC, Applicant and Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, Owner for property located at 451, 455, & 495 Route 2; Comprehensive luxury recreational campground for January 25, 2022. Fred Eddy seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Kathy Warzecha shared a letter from School Superintendent Roy Seitsinger concerning the application for the luxury campground to be reviewed.

9. Other Matters

- a. **Approval for Planning & Zoning 2022 Calendar of meetings**

Richard Chalifoux motioned to approve the 2022 Planning and Zoning Calendar of meetings. Fred Eddy seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

- b. **Bond release for Site Plan Application #2020-01 and Special Exception Application #2020-01, Amos Lake Holding Co. LLC**

Kathy Warzecha reported to the Commission that she did an inspection and found that the driveway is completed, the plantings are done, and the directional signs have been properly installed and recommended that Bond be released.

Charles Raymond motioned to release the Bond held for Site Plan Application #2020-01 and Special Exception Application #2020-01, Amos Lake Holding Co. LLC. Mike Sinko seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Mike Sinko motioned to move items f and g on the Agenda forward. Richard Chalifoux seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

c. Request to address the Commission, Ken Zachem and Max Zachem regarding 356 Route 2.

Ken Zachem presented that there is a discrepancy in the regulations and asked for a clarification from the Commission. He would like to use the 100' from the center of Route 2 on his project rather than the property line. By doing this he would be able to use an already established dirt parking area. If the setback has to be from the property line then he loses those parking spaces. He also feels that those parking spots would advertise that his place of business is open and would create cohesiveness along Route 2 corridor.

After much discussion and reading of the Regulations that pertained to the matter, Chairman Moran asked each member of the Commission their thoughts on the matter. Mike Sinko stated that the plan was approved according to the Regulations so there is no action needed to be taken. Fred Eddy, Charles Raymond, Richard Chalifoux, Doreen Rankin, and Art Moran, Jr. agreed.

Max Zachem asked what other steps could be taken. Kathy Warzecha mentioned that he could request a change in the regulation.

d. Request to address the Commission, Art Moran, Jr. regarding 31A Harris Fuller Road.

Chairman Art Moran, Jr. recused himself at this time, and Richard Chalifoux took over the meeting.

Mr. Moran showed pictures of the road that is eroded and difficult to drive up. The road is on the property owners land, however the radio tower company has to maintain it. The 300 foot long road has more than an 8% grade. There has been a great deal of erosion that makes it a safety issue due to the fact that emergency vehicles would have a difficult time reaching homes and the radio tower. Both Tom Casey and the Resident Trooper feel that this is a safety hazard.

Kathy Warzecha suggested that with the Bond already released, that she contact the Town's Attorney and discuss with him how to proceed with the matter. The workmanship didn't hold up and the applicant is no longer compliant with the plan.

Chairman Art Moran, Jr. resumed his duties as Chair.

e. Cannabis Follow-up of Draft Regulations to be distributed

Kathy Warzecha passed out a Draft of the Regulations thus far and asked members of the Commission to take them home and look them over. She did let them know that it does not address production facilities only retail. She stated that it's very similar to liquor stores. She reminded them that the applicants would need approval from the town and then acquire a state permit.

Members requested that before the December meeting they would like to see a copy of what Stonington just approved on the subject.

f. Affordable Housing

At the second meeting they prepared the survey that will go out on December 15th on the Town Website. The Town Website, EverBridge, and hopefully an article in The Day will inspire citizens to participate in the survey that will be available for one month.

Kathy Warzecha stated that she has researched the prices of homes throughout Preston and feel that they are reasonable for the average family.

g. POCD

Kathy Warzecha shared that she is waiting for all of the 2020 census data to be released so that the most updated information can be used.

10. Public Comment

Jerry Grabarek, 17 Hewitt Road, stated that the right of way along Route 2 varies greatly from one end to the other, from 3 lanes down to 2. Secondary roads are from the center line so it would be more consistent to do all roads from the center of the road.

Jen Hollstein, 12 Lynn Drive, asked how the Blue Camp project could submit an application if the Inland & Wetlands Commission hasn't even acted on the matter.

Kathy Warzecha explained that they can submit their application, but the PZC can't act on it until the Inlands & Wetlands has acted on it.

Building Inspector Tom Weber and acting Zoning Enforcement Officer was introduced to the Commission. He stated that he has worked with several area towns in a variety of capacities.

11. Adjournment

Mike Sinko motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 P.M. Richard Chalifoux seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Lang

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